

#### **7.5.7 (13484)**

**Comment** - 010260 / 0008

The exclusion zone needs to be expanded to more adequately protect the surrounding residents.

Sand filters need to be used in all ventilation shaft locations throughout the facility. The greatest technological measures need to be taken to ensure worker safety and the prevention of radioactive releases to the surrounding region. HEPA [high-efficiency particulate air] filters are not an adequate alternative. We are interested in how these filters will be disposed when their effectiveness expires.

#### **Response**

Potential impacts of accidents at the repository are examined in Section 4.1.8 and appendix H. These analyses indicate the area of land withdrawal and level of filtration on repository facilities provides adequate protection for members of the public from credible repository accidents. Some surface facilities, such as the Waste Handling Building, would use high-efficiency particulate air filters; the subsurface repository would not unless a release was detected. The filters would capture nearly all of the particulate radionuclides that are the main concern for dose to the public. The filters would not capture noble gas radionuclides. The main radionuclide that would be released from the subsurface repository during routine activities would be naturally occurring radon-222, also a noble gas, and neither high-efficiency particulate air nor sand filters would provide effective control of radon-222. In fact, sand filters are not considered to be a practical alternative for filtering of radionuclides at the repository or at other nuclear facilities.

#### **7.5.8 AESTHETICS**

##### **7.5.8 (1368)**

**Comment** - EIS000375 / 0003

The air quality in this part of the United States and visual acuity to see the moon and the stars is very high. This is a covenant resource that we oftentimes don't consider of value, but it is of value. Dark nights where astronomers can view stars, as well as the public can enjoy stars, is an important resource to Death Valley National Park.

We believe -- I haven't read it anywhere -- but we believe as a fairly safe presumption that given a 10,000-year security plan, which, again, I find a little hard to comprehend, will result in fences, guards, bright lights, somewhat similar, as has been mentioned in other ways, to a maximum security prison. Yucca Mountain is only 12 miles from Death Valley. We believe that will be an imposition on the scenic resources of Death Valley National Park, particularly at night. We believe that this project, if that is true, would significantly decrease this desert quality.

#### **Response**

DOE would provide night lighting at the proposed repository. This lighting could be visible from public access points to the south many miles from the repository. Ventilation stacks along the crest of Yucca Mountain could be visible if lighting atop the stacks was required. The effects of lighting from the repository would likely be less than the effects of light emanating from towns between the repository and Death Valley (Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump). The lights from Las Vegas are most likely the dominant contributors to night lighting in southern Nevada. DOE has added a discussion of nighttime darkness as a resource around Yucca Mountain to Section 3.1.10 of the EIS. Outdoor night lighting at the Yucca Mountain Repository would be shielded and directed downward where possible.

##### **7.5.8 (8091)**

**Comment** - EIS000406 / 0011

The following issues need to be addressed and thoroughly analyzed concerning direct impacts to Lander County in a detailed manner:

Aesthetics effect

#### **Response**

The Carlin Corridor, one of five candidate rail corridors considered by DOE in Section 6.3 of the EIS, would pass through Lander County. About 85 percent of the 400-meter-wide (1,300-foot-wide) corridor crosses public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. As a consequence, DOE used the Bureau's visual management

guidelines to assess the corridor's scenic sensitivity. As described in Section 3.2.2.1.8 of the EIS, most of the Carlin Corridor crosses land in Lander County determined by the Bureau to be Visual-Class IV; Class III lands are crossed near Caliente and Class II lands are crossed or skirted also near Caliente and other areas (Section 3.1.10 describes the four visual resources classes). Section 6.3.2.1 of the EIS describes the potential impacts from sections of the rail corridor that pass through Lander County.

DOE recognizes that additional, site-specific information would be needed prior to either constructing a branch rail line or upgrading roads to support heavy-haul truck shipping. DOE believes, however, that sufficient information on impacts to visual resources is provided in Chapter 6 of the EIS to help make a decision about the transportation mode (rail or truck) and the specific corridor or heavy-haul truck route (see Section 1.1 of the EIS), if the repository was recommended and approved. More detailed field surveys, government consultations, and National Environmental Policy Act reviews would be prepared if a decision was made to select either a specific rail alignment within a corridor, or an intermodal transfer station and associated heavy-haul truck route. These reviews could include more detailed analyses of impacts to visual resources, as well as the identification of additional mitigation measures to minimize any impacts that are identified.

#### **7.5.8 (8353)**

##### **Comment** - EIS001873 / 0041

P. 3-87. BLM visual resource classes are not in themselves very meaningful. Other agencies and organizations must be consulted.

##### **Response**

DOE used the Visual Resource Management classifications developed by the Bureau of Land Management to assess visual sensitivity because the rail corridors cross mostly public land administered by the Bureau. The Bureau has prepared many environmental documents that use this visual-assessment classification. DOE incorporated this approach into the repository EIS for consistency with the Bureau's approach, and to facilitate comparison with previous assessments conducted by the Bureau.

DOE agrees that factors other than the Visual Resource Management classifications are pertinent to assessing visual impacts. Therefore, DOE has included additional discussion in Sections 6.3.2.2 and 6.3.3.2 of the EIS of potential impacts to selected views from outside and inside each candidate rail corridor, and the visual impacts associated with the candidate sites for an intermodal transfer station.

#### **7.5.8 (11166)**

##### **Comment** - EIS000326 / 0002

We finally get there [Yucca Mountain] on the final day of our trip, and we can't get to the place that we wanted to get to, the campsite at the mountain, because a road had been washed out by a flood. And we couldn't pass this sort of wash because it was too radioactive, we were told. We couldn't camp in it, and we didn't want to go past it. We didn't want to go in it, so we had to stop. We stopped where we were to spend the night there in front of that wash. And we spent the night under the stars, and we developed a relationship with that mountain and with the land there. We had time with it. We woke up in the morning, and we discovered that this place which is so often thought of as arid. Maybe even people think there isn't very much life there because it's a desert. The desert -- it's a really complex place, and there's all kinds of life there: plants, animals, insects. Really, it was really vibrant; it was beautiful. And we all loved it, you know. And just along the lines of empathy that I was talking about within this room, I think it's a really big step for us but it's an important step that we start to recognize all these different life forms and empathy for them and put them into the equation, put everyone in this country into the equation, put every life form into the equation when we make any decisions, because we do not exist in spite of the life forms. We exist because of them.

##### **Response**

Thank you for your comment. DOE has documented the natural diversity of the Yucca Mountain region in Chapter 3 of the EIS.